

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please AMEND claims 1-10 as shown below.

1. (Currently amended) A system for forming containers, ~~in particular containers for~~ food products, comprising:

a first feed station by which a continuous strip of a forming material is directed along a predetermined feed path;

a main reel rotatable about a relative longitudinal axis, from which the strip is decoilable along the feed path;

a second feed station supplying a single file of tubular elements generated from the strip along a respective feeding direction;

sealing means operating on a first open end of each tubular element in such a way as to enclose the selfsame first end;

at least one wheel movable between a first position of reception of the tubular elements and a second position of alignment of the tubular elements with the sealing means; said wheel being rotatable around an axis which is perpendicular to the feeding direction and to a transportation direction of the tubular elements in the proximity of the wheel; said feeding direction being parallel to the transportation direction.

2. (Previously presented) A system as in claim 1, wherein the wheel comprises a central hub rotatable about said axis, also a plurality of supporting elements projecting radially from the hub and serving to carry the tubular elements, of which the supporting elements each present a first end anchored to the hub and a second end remote from the first end.

3. (Previously presented) A system as in claim 2, wherein each supporting element of the wheel presents a substantially parallelepiped shape matched to the internal geometry of the tubular element, in such a way that each tubular element can be fitted over a respective supporting element with the relative first open end positioned at the second end of the supporting element.

4. (Previously presented) A system as in claim 2, wherein the sealing means comprise: a first joining head positioned to interact with the first open end of each tubular element and serving to unite two opposite sides of the tubular element coinciding with the selfsame first open end; a press operating downstream of the first joining head, relative to the feed direction, by which the joined sides are engaged and directed forcibly toward the hub in such a way as to establish a substantially flat base surface of the tubular element disposed transversely to the longitudinal dimension of the selfsame element and presenting two end folds projecting laterally from relative opposite side walls of the tubular element; a fixed fold guide positioned along a sealing path and downstream of the press, relative to the feed direction, by which the end folds are engaged, bent toward one another and flattened over the joined sides; and a second joining head positioned to interact with and unite the two end folds, thereby completing the closure at the relative end of the container.

5. (Previously presented) A system as in claim 4, wherein the first joining head comprises two folder elements by which the corresponding sides of the open end are drawn together and the respective top edges of the sides matched one to another; also a sealer operating on the two edges in such a way as to secure the selfsame edges one to another.

6. (Previously presented) A system as in claim 4, further comprising two restraints positioned in alignment with the press, between which an advancing supporting element is insertable in such a way that each end fold will locate against a respective restraint under the action of the press.

7. (Previously presented) A system as in claim 6, further comprising two sealers, each positioned in alignment with a respective restraint and serving to seal the end folds.

8. (Previously presented) A system as in claim 4, wherein the second joining head comprises an arm capable of vertical movement and offered to the flattened end folds at a central point on the base surface.

9. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 1, wherein the tubular elements are prepared by a forming device positioned to coincide with the second feed station and comprising: a gripper element for bending a blank around a former of shape corresponding to the shape of the tubular element in such a way that one longitudinal edge of the blank is made to overlap the other; and a feed mechanism by which the tubular element is advanced along a radial infeed direction toward the conveying mechanism.

10. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 1, wherein the tubular elements are prepared by a forming device positioned to coincide with the second feed station, comprising a gripper element to engage the opposite edges of a precreased blank presenting a tubular structure and a substantially flat rhomboidal profile when viewed in section, and thereupon apply a compressive force to the opposite edges such as will cause the flattened profile of the blank to expand to a substantially square profile when viewed in section.